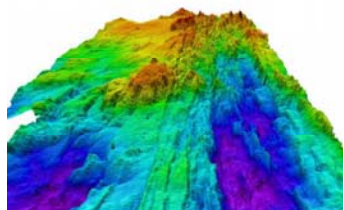




Office of Ocean Exploration

Leader in Ocean Exploration



Creating new high-resolution maps of the ocean is central to the Ocean Exploration mission. These maps give scientists important information about unknown ocean regions.



The turret of the USS Monitor breaks the surface for the first time in 140 years. Onlookers aboard the Emmanuel cheer its arrival and marvel at a job well-done.



Two divers explore under the Arctic ice as the expedition ROV returns from a dive to 2800 m.

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The Vision:

The oceans are the lifeblood of Earth. They cover 70% of the planet's surface, drive its weather, cleanse its atmosphere and ultimately fuel all living creatures. Throughout our history they have been a vital source for sustenance, transport, commerce, growth and inspiration. Yet for all our reliance on the oceans we have explored less than 5% of their breadth and depth.

Realizing the urgent need for a better understanding of this critical global resource, and in response to growing national concern over the state of the oceans, the US government empowered a panel of experts in 2000 to develop a national strategy for ocean exploration. The result was the creation of a National Ocean Exploration Program in 2001 to be led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The Mission:

NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration program (OE) was created to investigate the oceans for the purpose of discovery, and the advancement of knowledge. NOAA's OE program signals a turning point for this nation's ocean exploration efforts and represents a bold and innovative approach. It infuses teams of multidisciplinary scientist-explorers with a "Lewis and Clark" spirit of discovery, then equips them with the latest exploration tools - some pioneered specifically to support OE missions. These new exploration tools are taking researchers to some of the deepest and least explored regions of the oceans from where important new understandings are evolving.

Its mission fits into four distinct areas:

- Mapping the physical, biological, chemical and archaeological aspects of the ocean;
- Understanding ocean dynamics at new levels to describe the complex interactions of the living ocean;
- Developing new sensors and systems to regain U.S. leadership in ocean technology, and;
- Reaching out to the public to communicate how and why unlocking the secrets of the ocean is well worth the commitment of time and resources, and to benefit current and future generations.

OE conducts and supports exploratory activities in the ocean and shares these experiences with the public by dedicating 10 percent of its annual budget to various outreach and education activities. Of most public interest is the use of outreach technologies and a commitment to share these 21st century explorations with millions of interested people. By tapping into OE's website www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov and other outreach initiatives, Americans become "citizen explorers" and connect deeply with their own instinctive fascination for the oceans.

The 2003 Field Campaign:

Expeditions and projects undertaken this year are built on our previous two years of precedent setting discovery-based ocean research. Results from this year's work already include new maps of previously unknown ocean areas, the discovery of new marine species, and volumes of new data for scientists, natural resource managers and decision makers. 2003 will see the exploration of important shipwrecks, the creation of new research partnerships, and the development of new tools for educators so that people of all ages can become ocean explorers

Research Partnerships:

NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration (OE) significantly leverages its funding and other resources via partnerships. For example, in FY 2002, when the appropriation for OE was also \$14 million, OE leveraged another \$13.5M via partnerships with 78 organizations.

Budget and Staff

The FY 2003 enacted budget for the Ocean Exploration budget line item totaled \$13.2M with an additional \$2M for the creation of an exhibit at the National Museum of Natural History. OE's request for FY 2004 totaled \$14.2M. The Office of Ocean Exploration office has 8 Federal employees and 10 other staff persons assigned to Ocean Exploration.

**Come explore with NOAA by visiting Ocean Exploration at:
<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov>**



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